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Managing Diversity in Workforce: IT Projects

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<p>Organizations are turning globally to remain competitive in today's world. It is important to have in place a strategy that builds cultural and other diversity awareness to avoid confusion and conflict during project execution. Certain types of customer projects in the case company were having problems in delivery due to its diverse workforce. The aim of the thesis was to create a set of common practices which project managers could follow to manage diversity during project execution stage of the project to improve project delivery.</p> <p>A qualitative research was used in this study. A current state analysis was done by interviewing leadership, project managers and key project team members. The results of the analysis revealed that there were no common conceptualized practices for managing diversity in these projects instead each project manager was dealing with diversity to their best understanding. The key problem areas were seen both in the cultural diversity as teams were in different countries and in the different level of experience in the team. A conceptual framework for addressing the problem areas was created and used to produce initial guidelines together with the strengths. The initial proposal was then reviewed and refined which resulted in the final version of the common conceptualized best practices.</p> <p>The author recommends the common conceptualized best practices to be used when dealing with diverse teams in the different project execution stages of these projects. The proposed guideline provides a comprehensive list of task which needs to be done during the different stages. The proposed guidelines has element of cultural diversity awareness, building trust, clear guidelines and expectations, effective communication, having virtual presence to build high performance team. The outcome supports the company strategy on collaboration and provides help for project managers to improve delivery of projects.</p>	
Keywords	Project Management, Diversity Management, Diverse teams

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1 Introduction

Today organizations are turning to diverse teams to achieve high performance and breakthrough results which they need to remain competitive in the increasingly diverse marketplace. The synergistic power of a diverse group of thinkers is more likely to spark innovative solutions than the efforts of a single expert or of a homogeneous team. But leveraging the potential of a diverse team to achieve high performance is not simple.

Given the enormous complexity of diverse high-performance teams and the challenge of keeping those on track needs continuous focused observing and monitoring. I have attempted to find the common conceptualized best practices which can be used to manage case company's co-source projects having diverse teams. The scope of this thesis is limited to two teams in the case company.

1.1 Case Company

Case company is a multinational management consulting, technology services and outsourcing company which helps clients become high-performance businesses.

As most consulting firms, case company operates in a matrix structure.

The first axis is dedicated to the operating groups, or industries of its clients.

Broadly, the five Operating Groups are:

- Communications, Media & Technology
- Financial Services
- Products
- Resources
- Health & Public Services

The five Operating Groups comprises 19 industry subgroups that focus on industry evolution, business issues, and applicable technologies.

The second axis is the growth platforms, which broadly refers to the functional or technical domains in which the case company creates and delivers solutions to clients.

Project management is one of the key competences needed in these groups and sub groups. Project management can be broken down into different project stages: project initiation, project planning, project execution, and project monitoring & control and project closure.

The project execution and control stage is about monitoring the progress of the project. It's also about controlling the quality of the product by tracking progress through regular checkpoints and resolving issues that arise during the course of the project. The majority of the work and time is spent during this stage. Project manager plays a key role between project team and the stakeholders. This work requires a significant amount of estimations, monitoring, controlling, conflict resolutions, calculations, and reporting work to stakeholders. In this thesis, in hierarchy after the Project managers there are team leaders for both on-shore and off-shore teams who report to the project manager and project engineers who are developers, testers, documentation engineers.

1.2 Business Challenge

The business challenge has been seen in project execution stage of the case company's co-source type of IT projects. These are long term projects where the case company is involved with the costing and time frame of delivery along with the client. Such projects have case company resources in client premises as well as off-shore in India Delivery Center.

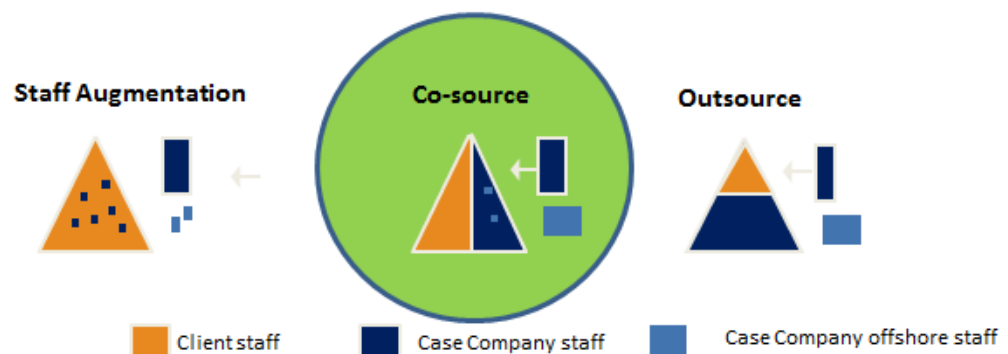


Figure 1: Typical IT project in the case company

Figure 1 shows typical IT projects on a higher level in case company. Staff Augmentation projects are the projects where case company provides staff to fill the gap in differ-

ent areas in Client Company. Co-source projects are another type of projects where case company provides capacity to one organization of the client and some of case company staff is off-shore. Over the period of co-source projects there are few resources or none left in the on-shore team and application maintenance is moved to off-shore team. The duration of these projects is between one to three years. In Co-source projects case company is managing the project along with client and there is always time and budget pressure. Outsource projects are another type of projects which are complete outsourced (mainly off-shore) to case company but the scope of this thesis is limited to co-source projects.

In these co-source projects delay has been seen in two projects. These co-source projects have diverse workforce. Delay in delivery affects project cost, estimation & budgeting and in some cases case company has to pay penalty to the client company. This is a business challenge for us and it affects case company reputation as a consulting company.

1.2.1 Objective and Intended outcome

We have diverse workforce in terms of culture, competence in these co-source projects. Managing diversity has its challenges and costs. Case company does not have common conceptualized practices for diversity management in these co-source projects. Every project managers is managing diversity based on his/her experience or trial and error method. If we have common guidelines that project managers and team leaders can use in these projects it will help case company save lot of time, money and effort which is used in managing diversity in these projects. Accordingly the objective of this thesis is to propose common practices for the case company to better manage diversity in these co-source types of projects.

The intended outcome of this research is the common conceptualized best practices which can to be used to manage diverse team in project execution stages of these projects. The proposed guideline as the outcome of this thesis provides a comprehensive list of task which needs to be done during different project execution stages of the co-source type of project. This guideline has elements of cultural diversity awareness, building trust, clear guidelines and expectations, effective communication, having virtual presence to build high performance team. These guidelines will help the case company save lot of time, money and effort for managing diversity in the co-source projects and will help in timely delivery of these co-source projects.

1.2.2 Delimitations

The study is limited to the co-source projects in the case company. Two co-source projects were studied, one of the co-source projects had teams in Switzerland and in India and other co-source project had teams in Norway and in India. The result of this thesis is set of common guidelines which can be used by project managers handling co-source projects and dealing with diverse team with respect to cultural diversity and experience diversity.

Whenever a new group or team is formed, the performance result is not certain. It can happen that even if tasks are described in detail, team members are selected carefully, and the team is managed sensitively, there is no guarantee that the team members will work together. There is no premeditated formula of ten easy steps for managing high performance diverse workforce, rules can warn managers of the anticipated problem areas or to successful practices; however they cannot be translated simply into performance. The proposed guidelines are according to the current state seen in these projects, they can be updated later to fit the current state at later stage.

2 Research Process

The nature of this research is action research. Action research can be used with the objective of improving company strategies or practices. It is believed that the inspiration to change is strongly related to action: If individuals are involved in business choices which influence them, they will probably adopt new ways.

As the nature of the business problem is such that I am directly involved in solving it as part of existing job responsibility, this design approach corresponds well to the business challenge.

2.1 Research Process

Below is the research process which I used for my thesis. The thesis is constructed from five different steps with each having their own outputs to be used in the following step.

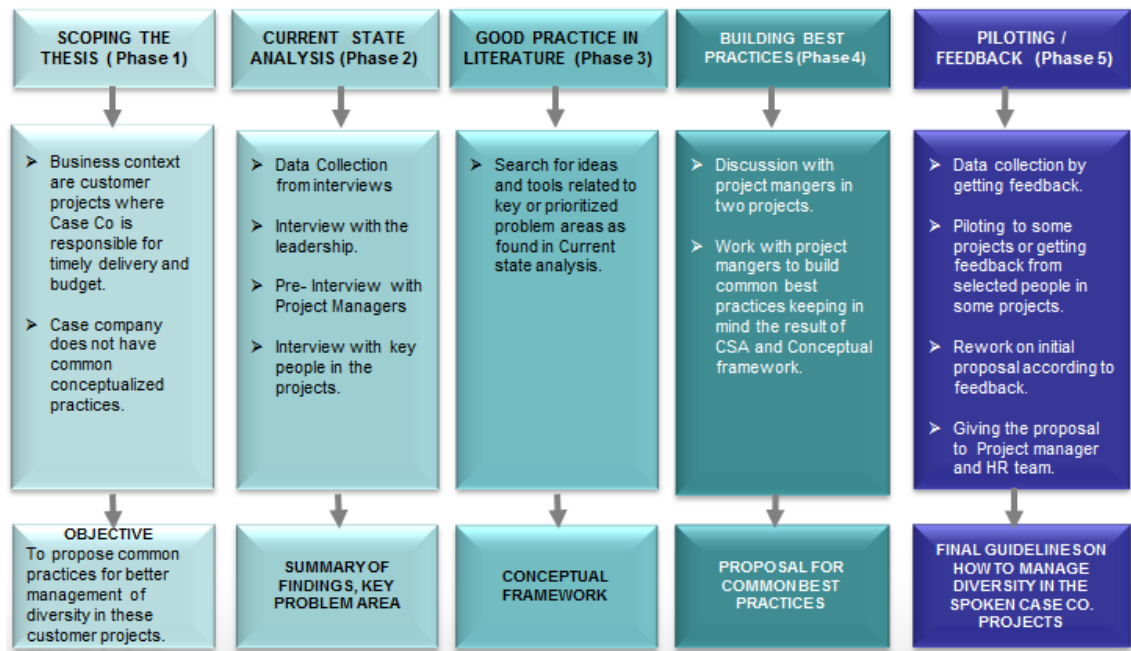


Figure 2: Research design

1. Scoping the thesis

The case company uses agile methodology in delivery of its co-source projects, which means we have to deliver software in iterations. These iterations are delivered end of each sprint cycle which is two weeks long. In addition we give weekly updates about progress of the project to client stakeholders and to the case company higher management separately. During the weekly update to the case company higher manage-

ment, the co-source project managers reported delay in delivery and proposed risk mitigation plan. In the proposed risk mitigation plan, some measures were taken by the project managers to improve delivery; anyhow this delay in delivery became a continuous process and resulted in lot of stress on project managers, team leaders and team members.

The delay in delivery was seen in two of the co-source projects which had teams in off-shore in India. Due to the delay of delivery, the scope of these projects was changed many times to match the timeline. Quite much time, effort and money was spend in execution, monitoring and controlling phase of the project due to diverse workforce. These workforces were diverse in terms of culture and experience. The project manager had the impression that the performance of off-shore team was not good. In comparison to the on-shore team, the off-shore team was taking twice the effort needed to complete a task. There was lack of trust among team members and just adding more offshore resources did not improved the delivery timeline. In these two projects the project managers are different persons and they have used their own understanding in dealing with diversity.

Some of their ways of handling team have helped and some have created more issues. Delay in project deliveries, managing diverse teams is a business problem for us. If we don't deliver in time and budget, the case company has to pay penalty to the client company and if effects case company's reputation as a consulting company. This has raised the question that if we could gather the best practices in diversity management which can help the co-source projects then we can make common conceptualized practices to manage diversity in teams and we will be able to deliver these projects on time and in budget.

To meet this need, the objective of this thesis was set which is also the first phase of research process. The objective was to propose common conceptualized best practices which can be used to manage diversity in the co-source projects.

2) Current state analysis

After the objective was set in the previous phase, to get a better understanding on how the case company is dealing with diversity I started with interviewing the Leadership/HR. I understood from the interview that we have general workshops for managing diversity but not at project level. Also these workshops were for managers and supervisors and not for people at junior level. I also understood from HR that we do have

company internal web pages which give some guidelines on diversity and inclusion; these guidelines can be used by anyone who is interested in diversity. Next step was to interview seven project managers out of which two were managing the co-sourced projects. Further I interviewed two key members in these projects; both were team leaders from the off-shore team.

During the interview some of the project managers mentioned that they have seen the guidelines but not everyone knew about diversity web pages. In general all project managers were handling their teams to their best understanding and from their prior experience. These project managers are experienced people in their profession and have been with the company for several years.

For the initial stage of project execution phase, some of the project managers have shown presentation about different culture, some have tried using technologies but they were not stable enough. All project managers have one same opinion that communication is a problem when working with diverse teams. Both project managers of co-sources projects have mentioned that ramping up off-shore team takes more time than initially anticipated and there are more conflicts seen in the initial stage.

Coming to the middle stage of project execution phase, managers see some conflicts which might be because in initial stage we did not have sound technologies for working with multi-location teams so message or communication is not so effective between team members and that can affect trust among them. Project managers agree that if we had supporting technologies in place then it would have helped in effective communication. Some knowledge sharing sessions have been arranged in this stage but in general managers expect employees to come forward and learn themselves on the job.

For the end stage of project execution, the project managers did not have a special matrix for seeing how diverse team is doing; all managers were using the project matrix. However both the project teams at this stage are aware of team member's competences and work better.

It was important to see the other viewpoint, so I interviewed two key persons from these projects. These people are the team leaders from the off-shore team. The team leaders were interviewed because they represent the off-shore team in answering my questions.

For the initial stage of project execution phase, the team leaders had the opinion that they were not told the guidelines in the beginning and were not clear about the scope of the project in the initial stage of project execution. As they are from different culture, they are a little bit hesitant in asking direct questions. The contact details given to them and presented on the dashboards were about managers and area leads. If they had name and contacts of subject matter experts, it would have helped them.

For the middle stage of project execution phase, they said that the common tools were built up in-between the project and still at times information was not conveyed to them. Their opinion was not considered important unless they talk directly to project manager. Related to knowledge sharing, they had to demand knowledge sharing session where as it should have started as regular session at initial stage of project. In one of the projects, the off-shore team were not directly involved in sprint planning and at time subject matter expert's opinion were taken as the estimation for a task in sprint planning. There was still lack of trust and conflicts seen between some team members in this stage.

For the end stage of project execution phase, they were aware of the maintenance stage and knew whom to contact.

All seven project managers gave recommendations on how to work efficiently with diverse team. This gives an opinion that to some extent project managers are aware of the challenges but everyone has their own way of dealing with those challenges.

The end result of this phase was to summarize the findings and to identify the key problem areas in current way of working in co-source project.

3) Good practices in Literature

To find the solution to key problem areas found in previous phase, next step was to know what literature recommends solving these problem areas. It was evident that we have to build a high performing team in a short time and to know more about team efficiency I read about different stages which explains team development, behavior and project manager or team leader's role in these stages by Bruce Tuckman (1965) and later on by Edison's model (2008).

Just knowing about team development was not enough; our co-source projects have teams in two locations so reviewing literature about diversity in terms of culture was

also needed. So later on I read about Hofstede (2011) model of six dimensions of national cultures. As the teams are virtual teams, reading literature about effective virtual teams by Nunamaker (2009) and by Lewis and Lente (1995) was the next step. We also had problem dealing with highly experienced team members so it was important to understand what literature says about experience diversity. I did not find any good models for experience diversity but found lot of articles related to how to learn from experts by Boh (2007), and about recognizing and utilizing expertise by Bunderson (2003) and about expert's roles by Stasser (1995).

The end result of this phase was to develop conceptual framework taking into consideration the key problems areas in previous phase of research process and the solution to those problems as found in literature.

4) Building best practices

Summary of the current state analysis shows that we have used some good practices in co-source projects which we can use to build the common conceptualized best practices to manage diversity. In addition from conceptual framework we had solution as shown in literature for the problems found in current state analysis phase of research process.

The end result of this phase was to utilize the ideas of the conceptual framework and existing areas of strength and together with the two project managers who are in co-source project we formed the initial proposal for common conceptualized best practices to manage diversity in co-source projects.

5) Feedback

The initial common conceptualized best practices were given for review to four project managers and the feedback was received. The common conceptualized best practices were refined and reviewed again according to the feedback and formed the final proposal for common conceptualized best practices for managing diversity in co-source project. It was again given for review to four project managers and HR and they accepted the final proposal.

The end result of this phase was to provide final version of common conceptualized best practices for managing diversity in co-source project.

2.2 Data collection and Data analyses

A qualitative research method was used in this thesis. The key stakeholders have been involved in the data collection and data analysis. The main data collection method was face-to-face Interview. Interview is one of the most used techniques in qualitative research.

First stage of data collection aim was to understand the current way of working. Interview was conducted with leadership to understand what the company is doing to facilitate diversity. This ensured flexibility in the research and allowed it to evolve in an exploratory manner. After that interview was done with seven project managers who have worked with diverse teams. Then more detailed interview with two co-sourced project managers and key people involved in their teams was done. The questions and answers are listed in Appendix.

The questions concentrated on finding out the project managers and key people view on team diversity in their project. The questions included the challenges which they are facing in terms of diverse workforce and our company's culture and way of working related to diverse teams.

All the candidates were first contacted by e-mail, where the purpose and motivation of this study were explained and some possible date for the interview timing were proposed. The questions were worded clearly in order to make it easy for the interviewer to understand them. In order for the interviewee to have more time to read and review the interview questions, it was sent to the concerned people beforehand. Few questions were added during the interview depending on the answer of the interviewee.

A few measures was put in place to overcome bias, and also questions that are more sensitive involving company's culture were put on the later part of the interview questions so that the interviewee will have much time to think about the company's way of doing work before giving his opinion. This was also a good way to determine the quality and validity of the information.

After the first round of interviews for data collection was done, notes were collected into a common text file for further analysis. The answers to certain questions were analyzed and a preliminary summary was constructed which was the current state analysis.

The initial proposal was made taking into consideration the result of current state analyses and the conceptual framework.

Second stage of data collection aim was to collect the feedback from the project managers on the initial proposal of the common conceptualized best practices. The project managers were contacted by email and the initial proposal as text document was send to them as an attachment to the email. Feedback was received from some project managers and it was summarized in a file and analyzed. Result of the analysis at this stage was that some refinement was needed to the initially proposed common conceptualized best practices.

After doing the changes to the initial proposal according to the feedback received, the final version of the proposal was made along with project managers who worked in co-sourced projects. The final version was send again as an email attachment to four project managers and HR and feedback was received. Result of the analysis at this stage was that these guidelines are good enough to be proposed as common conceptualized best practices for diversity management in co-source project and no further refinement is needed.

3 Current State Analysis

After the objective of the thesis was set, it was good to understand the current way of working at company level, at manager level and at team leader level to get the overall picture of the current situation. The aim of the current state analysis was to summarize the current way of working and find the key problem areas.

3.1 Current State Analysis

For current state analysis, first interview was with HR/leadership to understand what facilities they provide to managers and employees. Then interview with seven project managers was done to understand how they handle diversity in their teams. Then another round of interview was done with two project managers and two key members who were handling co-source projects.

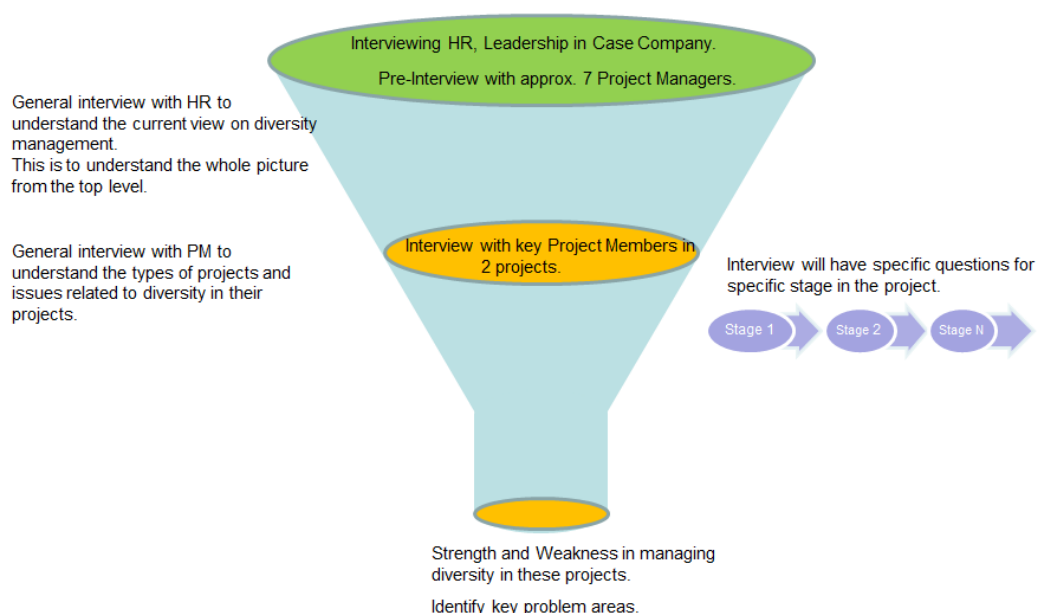


Figure 2: Current state Analysis

The interview with HR showed that there are cultural diversity websites which has presentations and training on cultures in different countries. The information is there but it is not forced on anyone. HR also guides managers, supervisors, and senior managers to handle diversity in their groups. However this information is not available for junior members of the company.

The interview with seven project managers gave me an understanding of how they see diversity in their projects and also the result showed me that only two managers were

aware of these links in the company. All the project managers were handling diversity problems in their best understanding or from prior experience.

The two project managers who were involved in co-source project were asked more detailed questions. These detailed questions were according to different project execution stages of co-source project. These projects can range from 2 to 3 years. For project of 2 years, the initial stage is 6 to 8 week from initialization, middle stage is 8 weeks to 20 weeks from initialization and end stage is 20 weeks to 24 weeks from initialization.

The general questions from seven project managers were mainly about

- What is your viewpoint on diversity? Do they see it advantageous to work in diverse team?
- Have you seen the cultural diversity website? Do you get any guidelines from case company management?
- What are the difficulties you are facing related to diverse team?
- Are they using any matrix which is used to validate that diverse team is adding value?
- Any General recommendations which you would like to give on working with diverse teams?

All the seven project managers have opinion that diverse team is advantageous as we are then able to work round the clock and deliver value to our clients. People from different locations and cultures bring different perspective to the table which is another plus point. Most of the managers have not seen the cultural diversity website in the company and all of them attended the workshops which were provided by the Leadership/HR. None of the project managers were using any special matrix to analyze how diversity is or not adding value to their project. They all are using project matrix. All the project managers gave good recommendations on how we can improve working in diverse workforce.

Then I had more questions which were divided according to project execution stage for the two project managers who were in co-source project. Both project managers have seen that there is lot of effort needed in communicating with any off-shore team. They have seen at times there has been miscommunication, lack of trust and conflicts in the team. The project matrix showed that the scope was changed often, ramping up time

was twice than expected and adding more resources did not help in reaching the project timeline.

These questions were divided in the general, initial, middle and end stage of the project execution stage in the project.

General questions

- Have you visited your off-shore team? Where are they located? Do they know you?
- Having diverse team problems, did it affect the cost and timeline of delivery?
- Do you think if we have common practices for dealing with diversity, it can help in saving the project cost and helping with delivery?

Both the project managers have visited their project teams. Regarding cost and timeline of delivery, one of the project managers mentioned that Initial stage cost was more than expected and timeline wise they had to adjust scope of the project to meet the timeline, so there was re-planning and re-scoping. Both agreed that streamlining any operation in project monitoring and control will help in delivery and saving cost but it should be combined with case company delivery methods.

Initial Stage questions

- What are the difficulties you are facing related to diverse team, can you explain it in different stages of the project.
- How often do you have conflicts in your team? How do you handle those?
- In which phase of project did you see these conflicts?
- Guidelines should be dictated in the beginning. We give the right and instruction on how to operate in the project. Has it been conveyed?
- How was knowledge sharing done in your team?
- Is everyone clear about their roles and project vision?

Regarding difficulties faced related to diverse team, one of the project managers mentioned that effective communication skills are needed to work with diverse team. Some of the team members are very experienced people in their field these people need to be managed differently. Reliability or trust came after two to three sprint cycles as teams are in different locations so it took time to gel the team. They spend quite a lot of time figuring out which is the best way to optimise knowledge sharing as video conferencing was not reliable. Other project manager had the opinion that diverse team

needs different way of handling situations and he has tried different way of decision-making processes at different stages in the project. One project manager mentioned that as team behaviour style is different because teams are from different cultures the communication with India Delivery Centre was somewhat hard in any stage of project because he had to explain the same things again and again. Both project managers agreed that they need to be more flexible in their approach to work with diverse teams.

Regarding conflicts, both agreed that they saw conflicts in the beginning stage of project execution but in latter stages they did not see many conflicts in the teams, but they did see lack of trust in the team members. Regarding guidelines and project vision, both project managers said that they have given guidelines in the beginning stage and they are sure that everyone knows and understands the project scope and their role in the project. Regarding the knowledge sharing both project managers have arranged on-demand knowledge sharing sessions and one of them has also arranged video session but these sessions did not last long as there were network and security issues.

Middle stage questions

- Did the team have trust on each other in this stage of project?
- Was there any conflict in this stage of project? How did you solve them?
- What are the difficulties you were facing related to diverse team in the middle stage of the project?

During the middle stage of the project execution, both project managers mentioned that team members were comfortable talking to each other and trust increased. One of the project manager said that as the team rely on each other work, conflicts cannot be avoided, so there were some conflicts but most of them were solved by talking. Other project manager said that communication and trust increased in this stage and they did not have any major problems. Regarding difficulties, one of the project managers said that effective communication skills are needed throughout the project execution.

Final stage questions

- Matrix is a way to validate that the diverse team is adding value. Did you have any matrix to see how well your diverse team is working?
- The project will soon go in application maintenance phase, how is the handover planned.

Both the project managers were using project matrix, so no special matrix was used to see that diverse team is adding value. The handover for one of project was planned that their off-shore team was taking over the maintenance phase of this project. They were having regular sessions about how transfer will be done. For the second project the maintenance was planned to be such that there would be another team in off-shore taking over the maintenance so the whole team would dissolve. For the second project regular transfer sessions had started. Both the project managers said that their team members know about the handover and they were involved in the transfer.

To understand the other side of the coin, I interviewed two team leaders who are off-shore team leaders in these co-source projects and their questions were also divided in initial, middle, end stage of the project execution stage in these co-source projects.

The questions mainly asked from these team leaders were

Initial stage questions

- Was the project vision, your role and scope clear to you in initial stage?
- Did you receive any guidelines?
- Were you clear about stakeholder expectations?
- How was the communication with the on-shore team? How often did you and your team communicate?
- Would you appreciate if your colleagues know more about your culture?

Both the team leaders from off-shore team mentioned that project vision was clear to them, however there were no guidelines given to them. At the beginning they were not clear about stakeholder expectations and if there would have been some guidelines it would have helped the team on-boarding the project. Both the teams were using daily scrums so they were communicating on daily bases and both of the team leaders mentioned that knowing culture of the on-shore team and vice versa would have helped.

Middle stage questions

- Are the team members comfortable with each other?
- Did your team have enough architectural knowledge of the domains?
- Was the off-shore involved in sprint planning?

For knowledge sharing both teams were using on-demand online sessions with subject matter experts, one of the team was using time-slots lync calls with experts so that they

don't disturb the subject matter experts whenever they face problem. For sprint planning one of the off-shore team was not involved at all, the planning sessions only included expert's estimates for tasks. Priority changes were quite often and the off-shore team came to know about it later. Both the team leaders see that communication was not so efficient between the team members.

Final stage questions

- Are you clear about how the application maintenance phase will take place?
- What are the challenges your team is facing with the current project?

Both team leaders knew about how maintenance phase would proceed. Towards the end stage the team members were quite comfortable with each other in both projects. Among challenges both team leaders see the need of regular knowledge sharing during initial stage and transparency of priority, clear guidelines and contact person name. Off-shore team spend some time finding out the contact persons, if there was a common contact list of developers and testers in on-shore team that would have saved time and effort. One of the team leader mentioned that the on-shore team has a biased opinion of off-shore team.

After analyzing the answers from project managers, HR and key project members, it was seen that we have some good practices and some practices which needs improvement. Following chapter tells the summary of the current state analysis.

3.2 The summary of the current state analysis

The summary shows that there were some good points and some key problem areas in current state analysis phase.

Following points summaries the current state analysis

- HR/Leadership provides information to work in diverse workforce in the form of newsletters, training, emails and workshops. These trainings are not mandatory for everyone; they can be taken if needed.
- All Project managers deal with diverse team in different ways depending upon their own experience.
- Some good practices were also found in these findings.
- Problem points were identified as listed below and categorized under two key problem areas.

<p>Key Problem Area 1 – (Cultural diversity)</p>	<p>Cultural diversity has a big impact on timeline of co-source project, especially in the beginning stage when the on-shore team has to team up with off-shore team. In most of the case company managed projects there are two teams one is on-shore and other one is off-shore.</p> <p>Ramping up the off-shore team takes lot of time, effort and lot of communication.</p> <p>Domain knowledge in any project should be gained fast. Having team in off-shore makes it more difficult for off-shore team members to gain domain knowledge and deliver value.</p> <p>It took lot of time for the teams to gain trust on each other.</p> <p>Requirements were not clear on several occasions.</p> <p>Priority change were not communicated to the off-shore team in time.</p> <p>Project guidelines were not conveyed properly which created confusion in the beginning.</p>
<p>Key Problem Area 2 – (Experience diversity)</p>	<p>Co-source projects team members are picked up based on their skills and availability. It is usually a mix of highly skilled team members, medium skilled team members and less experienced team members. These team members come from more or less similar education background but different level of experience.</p> <p>Experienced team members take interesting tasks in the project and less experienced members are left with low</p>

	<p>hanging fruits of the project.</p> <p>On the job learning is encouraged in the case company. Team members are expected to learn and deliver at the same time, with diverse experience team it is harder to learn and deliver at the same time.</p> <p>It took lot of time to achieve good team dynamics.</p>
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3.3 Strength or Good practices

Knowing the capabilities of the team members including their soft skills allows a leader to set realistic goals and budget the project according. It can help leader determine how training, coaching can help eliminate these gaps. A Successful project manager or team leader needs to put together a team that can deliver the expected deliveries of the project and also can think creativity in their work, he should be able to identify team's strength and make the best use of it.

There were some good practices or strength in these co-source projects which were found during current state analysis.

- Case company provided some training about diversity to the consultants; although they are not compulsory they are good to attend and many team members attended the training.
- Daily calls were used to track the progress of the project which involved the team in India Delivery Center (IDC) and on-shore team. It is good way to keep the communication channels open.
- Project manager and key team members visited IDC and IDC team members visited on-shore which enabled communication channels.
- A discussion forum "wikki" and "Confluence" was established which was intended to be the portals for team interaction as well as for sharing knowledge, how-

ever due to technical difficulties the use of the these forums deemed as insufficient.

- Some video sessions for the team were arranged to help the off-shore team understand the domain or architecture. Video recording sessions were ok but live video sessions where the teams meet were not stable. Anyway it is good practice to use technology for knowledge sharing.

4 Best practices of diversity management as found in relevant literature

In this thesis, Conceptual framework was done based on literature review and the key problem area from the current state analysis. For deeper understanding, it is relevant to look at the expertise knowledge and research work done in the field of diversity in teams. This framework will help in justification and evaluation of research work.

One of the key problems was related to cultural diversity so I started by reading literature about diversity in teams and team development stages. Then I read about culture diversity and virtual teams. Another key problem was related to experience diversity, so it was also necessary to read about experience diverse teams.

4.1 Concept of diversity

The concept of diversity is about acceptance and respect for individuals. It means understanding our differences and moving beyond tolerance to embrace the goodness which diversity brings. It is good to first understand meaning of diverse teams and good practices to work in the diverse teams.

4.1.1 Diverse teams.

The word diversity means several types of differences among individuals but the most commonly used definition by Williams & O'Reilly (1998) is "any attribute that another person may use to detect individual difference". While this being true, it is quite wide, various categorizations based on race, gender, nationality, minority have been used to refine definition of diversity.

Diversity in some cases can also be based on informational differences, like a person's education & experience, as well as on values or goals that can influence what one perceives. Even though teams are diverse in many ways these teams can help in creating value for the company by better product development, by reaching new markets, by giving new and innovative ideas.

Productivity, quality and morale are improved when team's potential is utilized, and for these undeniable reasons teams have become very important for any type of organization. (Stough)

Some of the main benefits of working in a team are:

- Working in teams improve understanding and acceptance between team members
- Teams produce a greater quantity work result..
- Personal biases can slow down the decision process, being in a team eliminates or restricts personal biases.
- Motivation increases when working in a team.
- Teams can be more innovative and can take collective risk-taking decision.

Making a team by putting people together does not necessary guarantee good results. There should to be some training and support by companies to develop the team to a high performance and effective team.

To summarize diversity in team is important and is needed for successful global companies. Making the most of diverse high performance work teams takes skill, time and awareness of differences. Depending on how they are managed, such teams can yield terrible headaches or terrific results as said by Lewis Brown Griggs and Lente-Louise Louw (1995)

Managing diversity had its own cost depending on what type or clusters of diversities we are dealing with. In the next chapter we learn more about theories about team development and about managing diverse teams.

4.1.2 Team development stages

It is very important to understand the different stages of team development. The action of Project manager taken during each stage determines the success or the failure of the team. So to understand team behavior at differ stages, I studied Tuckman's model.

Bruce Tuckman (1965) proposed a model of five different stages which explains team development and behavior and the leader's role in every stage of the development. The five stages of his model are (1) Forming, (2) Storming, (3) Norming, (4) Performing, and (5) Adjourning.

First stage is forming - According to the Tuckman's model; this is the most important stage where the project manager or team leader gives guidelines and directions. It is

project manager's role to provide clear goals and objectives for all the team members. There will be less confusion between team members and every team member will know their respective roles and responsibilities. Team formation plays a large role in the success or the failure of team and that is why this stage needs significant care by the project managers in order to channel the team to the right direction.

Second stage is storming – After the team formation is the storming stage. The team members are more resistant to ideas or suggestions of other team members and conflicts arise between team members. At this stage project managers or team leaders should act as coach for the team and should try to create better understanding among team members.

Third stage is norming – After the storming stage is the norming stage. This is the stage where team member's role and responsibilities are established. This means that team members develop commitment towards common goal and create team unity feeling. Overall team reciprocates better and agreement between team members can be reached without much difficulty.

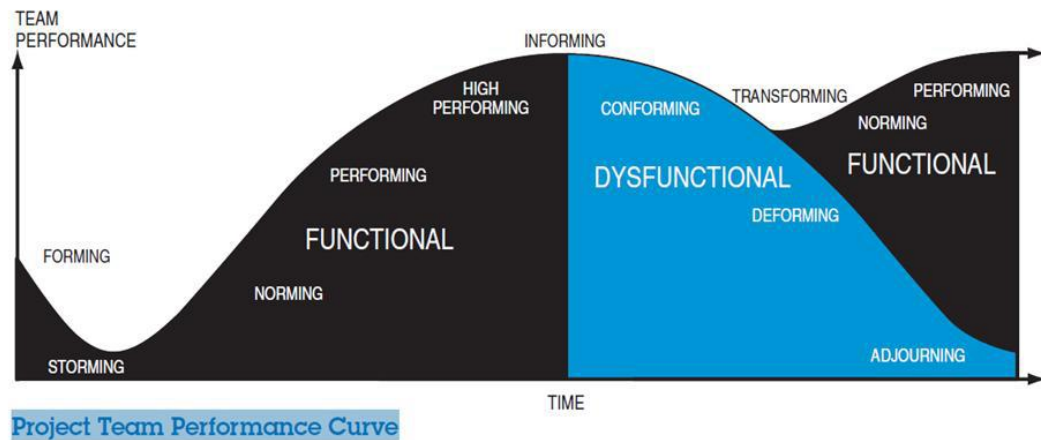
Fourth stage is performing – At the fourth stage, team tries to achieve team objective. If there are some conflicts at this stage, team members will try to resolve it constructively. Assumption is that there is common understanding among team members and everyone shares and understands common project vision. At this stage, project manager just needs to delegate and supervise the work.

Fifth stage is adjourning – This is the last stage in Tuckman model. This is the stage where the team will break-up which means that the team has achieved its goals and positive and negative experience is assessed as lesson learned.

Dr. Tom Edison later on came up with what he says “complete” life cycle of team. His model is based on Tuckman's model. Edison believed that Tuckman's five stage model does not have enough understanding of the team development and it cannot be used for all teams and different project situations. Edison expanded the model by adding four new stages. These stages are added in the team's dysfunctional stage. These are the stages that might cause the team to deviate from its objective.

Edison believes that team goes through functional as well as dysfunctional stages. In order to correct mistakes and to put the team back on track, it is very important to un-

derstand the dysfunctional stage. Therefore, Edison has added four new stages of the team development which are explained below.



Source: Development stages of the team (Defense AT&L: May - June 2008)

Sixth stage is informing – This is the tip of the functional stage. Once the team has reached the highest performing stage, all results whether difficulties or success should be communicated to the higher management so that others can learn from it and the outcome can be used by other teams within the company to achieve identical success and to avert mistakes made by the other teams.

Seventh stage is conforming – This stage is the dysfunctional stage in the team. In this stage team members start thinking alike and therefore there is absence of creativity. Even though the team members are comfortable with each other at this stage, if there is lack of innovative ideas, it can adversely affect the team. Team members will not be motivated that this can lead to the stagnation of the team.

Eighth stage is deforming – After the conforming stage is the deforming stage, here the team has fully become dysfunctional. In the deforming stage team will collapse as there is lack of passion and creativity in the team at this stage. Team members might start skipping meetings or some team members might leave the team. This will also affect those who stay in the team, these people will start losing interest in team and will not be so competent.

Ninth stage is transforming – To avoid deforming of the team some adjustments or transformation to the teams must be done. Transforming is basically a transitional stage between functional and dysfunctional stage in a team. Once the team has be-

come dysfunctional it needs to go through major changes otherwise it will fail and It is the team leader's job to react quickly to the situation to save the team.

The Project manager or team leader will have to find new ways to energize and motivate the team. This could be either by being in new ideas and creative techniques to the team, or by bringing in a facilitator for the team. Transforming stage will enable the team to get back on its feet again and if there is enough stimulants in the team, it will become high-performing again. Edison (2008).

The teams in co-source projects are not permanent. These teams are formed when the project starts and are dissolved when the project ends, so these models are suitable for understanding what happens during the team development stages. It was easy to see and relate that if the goals and objectives are not conveyed properly to the team members in the team forming stage, it could affect the other following stage. Our co-source teams also went through all these stages. If we could reduce the time for team's storming and norming stage in our co-source project, it will be improve the delivery. Comparing to Edison's model ,we don't have much dysfunctional stage in our projects, out of the four stages which he has shown in his model, informing is the only one which can be mapped to our co-source projects and it is also end stage of project execution in co-source projects. In order to see how we can reduce the time for storming and norming stage of our co-source project my next step was to study theories on managing diverse teams.

4.1.3 Managing diverse teams

Due to the continuous and rapid expansion of global businesses in today's world, everything is fast these days. This means people, money, information, technology travels more rapidly, and widely than before. This always expanding scope and scale of global firms over the recent decades have already been documented by numerous reports. To remain competitive in the 21st century, globally employees must be increasingly specialized, yet must work together in cross-functional teams. This creates a need for experience coordination and management.

Many companies calculate incorrectly the time it takes for a diverse team to cooperate synergistically. Whenever a team is formed it creates a new culture. Team members should get to know each other and trust each other before setting standards for performance and developing rules for acceptable or unacceptable behavior. Making a united team from relatively similar individuals is hard enough; this difficulty is multiplied

when team members come from different culture or different country. Each team member brings with him, his individual ways as well as cultural and social values about certain way of doing things. As a consequence, diverse teams require more skillful coordination than homogeneous teams.

It is easier to talk about maturity in people than it is to identify it. Some managers think all they have to do to form a high-performance team is to bring together talented individuals who have excellent record. But just because individuals perform well in one team does not mean that they will perform well in the other team. The familiar disclaimer used by mutual funds to warn prospective investors of the risk factors in investing holds true for prospective team members: Past performance is no guarantee of future results.

Another difficulty companies are facing is judging people awareness of cultural differences. We may assume that we know about each other's cultures than we actually do. In fact most of us have only superficial understanding or some assumption of other's cultures. Encased in our own cultural bubble, we rarely penetrate other people's cultural bubbles. It is important to be self-aware in order to understand others.

Before starting to work new team members can benefit from assessing their own awareness. This could be awareness of personal patterns which is to understand own style of thinking, communicating and own preferences and awareness of Interpersonal patterns which is how I understand other team members and awareness of cultural patterns which is to understand and be aware of their cultural differences.

The Project manager or team leader should be aware of this challenge in order to take appropriate actions. He could lead the team effectively by hiring team members with appropriate skills, providing them with clear goals and guidelines right at the beginning of the team formation, defining roles and responsibilities for every member and he should encourage and guide the team to build good relationship and trust between each team members.

The case company projects are such that we have teams in off-shore (India) and in on-shore. On-shore teams in this research are teams in Europe (Switzerland, Norway). The biggest challenges for distributed diverse team members are demands for attention, vagueness using remote communication, difficulty in establishment of personal relationships, and the need for available, stable, and easy to use technology to com-

municate. So I studied further best practices and theories given by different researchers in culturally diverse teams.

To understand cultural diversity I studied Hofstede's theory. Hofstede's cultural dimensions theory is a framework for cross-cultural communication, developed by Geert Hofstede. His theory describes the effects of a society's culture on the values of its members, and how these values can affect the behavior of individuals. The dimensions are the following

Power distance – Is the degree to which the less powerful or junior individuals of an organization accept and expect the power. In a high degree of power distance societies, individuals accept hierarchies in which everyone has a place and no justification is needed. Societies that have low power distance seek to have equal distribution of power and have fewer hierarchies.

Individualism versus collectivism – Means the degree to which individuals are integrated into groups. The people from individualistic society are expected to stand up for themselves and their immediate family. In individualistic societies, the stress is put on people personal achievements and their individual rights. In Collectivist societies, individuals think that they are members of a cohesive group or organization and they stand up for their group.

Uncertainty avoidance – Means a society's tolerance for uncertainty and ambiguity. It reflects the extent to which individuals of a society attempt to cope with anxiety due to uncertainty. Individuals in high uncertainty avoidance cultures will avoid the unknown and unusual situations and will be extra cautious in planning, in implementing rules and regulations. In low uncertainty avoidance cultures individuals will be more acceptable to unstructured situations; they are more relaxed and comfortable in unstructured situations and will have few rules. Low uncertainty avoidance cultures are more tolerant to changes.

Masculinity versus femininity – This means the distribution of emotional roles between the two genders. In masculine cultures values are competitiveness, determination, materialism, ambition and power, whereas in feminine cultures values are in relationships and wellbeing of people. In masculine cultures, the differences between gender roles are more powerful and less flexible than in feminine cultures. In feminine culture men and women have the same values emphasizing modesty and consideration.

Long term versus short term orientation – Here long-term oriented society give more importance to the future. They promote values towards rewards, persistence and saving and they have capacity for adaptation. In short term oriented societies; the values promoted are related to the past and the present, including steadiness, respect for traditions, safeguarding one's face and fulfilling social obligations.

Indulgence versus restraint – This means to what extent individuals of a society try to control their desires and impulses. In indulgent societies, individuals are allowed to show or express basic and natural human desires related to enjoying life and having fun. In restrained societies individuals have a conviction that such gratification needs to be curbed and regulated by strict rules.

Hofstede model can be used to give a general overview and an approximate understanding of other cultures, it can be used to understand what to expect from different cultures and how to behave towards team members from other countries.

It helped me understand different business drivers for global businesses. Europe and America have highly individualistic cultures and Asia has more collective cultures. The masculine culture in Japan and India are in contrast to the feminine cultures in Scandinavia when it comes to people management. The respect for hierarchy and status which is present in high power distance cultures such as in India are not easily combined with the low power distance in places such as Switzerland and Norway. Managers in weak uncertainty avoidance cultures such as Norway understand why they must be clear and specific while giving instructions to strong uncertainty avoidance culture society such as India.

As the teams in this research are spread in different locations I researched on how virtual teams should work. Team work and sharing knowledge between team members is one of the priorities of any project. Team should share and Integrate knowledge, some of the researchers Lee Gardenswartz, Jorge and Anita Riwem (2009), Hofstede (2011) and Boh (2007) has found out that being explicit, explaining more in detail is helpful for any team.

This may come easily to people of a low-context culture such as Europe where individuals tend to speak directly without much elaboration which might take away some rich-

ness. In spite of cultural issues, precise and clear communication is a fundamental element for successful globally distributed teams.

Every virtual interaction, whether via email, or a sophisticated group support system, should begin with a clear explanation of purposes and expectations to avoid miscommunication. It is often seen that sender is expecting a reply for email and receiver does not even know that he has to reply to the email and therefore never answered. Whenever ideas and concepts are not clearly conveyed, teams experience trouble advancing towards their objective and it can create confusion or misunderstanding.

Sharing information these days is done mainly via electronic correspondence media. Therefore it is important to have the right technology in place to enable efficient communication and collaboration between team members. Teams in different locations and having time differences experience a variation of virtual presence problem. Team members sometime have no way of knowing when others have made contributions to the joint effort if the common tools are not in place. Lacking such signs, team members may get the sense that the project is sluggish and stop contributing to the project.

Although diversity is valuable, it can bring in clashing expectations in terms of work processes, including language and behavioral norms, therefore it is important to agree on standards and terminology as mentioned by Nunamaker (2009), Lewis Brown and Lente (1995)

Research has shown that Leveraging anonymity when appropriate can be a useful tool for encouraging open and frank communication. Anonymous contributions will reduce politically based decision making. It is mostly useful during activities when people are trying to brainstorm new ideas or during the first phase of idea evaluation.

In the co-source projects, the project team members are picked up based on their skills and availability. It is usually a mix of highly skilled members, medium skilled members and less experienced members. These team members come from more or less same educational background but have different level of experience. So we end up having a team where there could be mixture of specialist and generalist. I wanted to understand how teams can gain experience from more experience members, how experts can understand less experience members, how we can develop good team dynamics with this mix of specialist and generalists. There was no particular model about experience diversity but there were some articles so I studied these articles.

Skills and knowledge both are important inputs as well as output for any software development work, because they are continuously improved with experience. Different stages (designing, coding, and testing) of software are complex and difficult tasks are sometimes built on practical experience. As individuals accumulate experience by completing certain type of work, they become more proficient. There are three types of cumulative experience acquired by individuals that can affect the productivity; it is individual productivity, team productivity and organizational productivity. These experiences could be gained working in specific systems or in some similar systems.

In systems development, specialization refers to the experience about a specific system. Specialized experience with a particular system increases team member's familiarity with the system or domain architecture including the structure of the components and the linkages between them. In software development sometime due to new feature or bug fixes, new code has to be integrated with existing code, therefore understanding the given component and its relations with other parts of the system is particularly important.

Research in psychology has found that individuals can automatically develop a new way of understanding a problem in hand because they apply knowledge from one domain to another: What was well understood in one problem domain can provide a related solution or suggestion to another problem domain. In our projects, team members can increase the diversity of their experience by working on a variety of related and unrelated systems. We expect team members to be able to use their experience gained from developing different systems in their work.

When working in a group there is need for sharing and integrating knowledge across group members as mentioned by Brooks (2005). When team member's work in a team, each member's expertise should have positive influence on team's productivity, Individual diverse experience is likely to improve knowledge sharing within the group but this needs good coordination skills of a leader.

In a software team, if team members have experience in a diverse set of systems, they will have a general understanding of the overall architecture of the product, and relations between different components of the system. If individuals are exposed to coding and development practices used in diverse set of systems, they are more likely to understand and appreciate development practices and coding styles adopted by other

developers which will reduce their biases that their way is the only correct way of doing things.

Hence, diversity of individual experiences improves the willingness of team members to share information and the ability of other team members to recognize the relevance and importance of information shared by others in the team. This facilitates information sharing and coordination in the team (Bunderson and Sutcliffe 2002, Rulke and Galaskiewicz 2000).

Learning can occur through knowledge exchange as team member's work with each other. Working with other team members gives individuals the opportunity to learn through observations and discussions about the task. In particular, the opportunity to work with many different team members will expose individual team member to diverse practices and insights which will enable them to benefit from other team members experience.

However, not all developers like to work with many others. One of the main principles of communication is selective exposure. We are usually inclined to individuals who are like us and who are most likely to agree with us. Individuals who interact selectively tend to avoid information and messages that might conflict with their own practices and personality. In contrast, individuals who work with many different team members have more opportunities to learn from others and they can share knowledge more extensively, thereby improving their and their team's productivity. To achieve this lot of coordination is needed.

The need for coordination is higher in large-scale software development, where there is lot of dependencies among individuals (Kraut and Streeter 1995). Expert coordination and group cognition have been found to have huge impact on team productivity. As team members interact over time, they develop common understanding about tasks, goals, and strategies that facilitate their work, which helps them to manage tasks and team member dependencies more effectively.

The literature review made me understand about why we had problems in the co-source teams and what the possible ways to solve it are. The end result of literature review is conceptual framework which is explained in next chapter.

4.2 Conceptual Framework summary

Based on the Literature review and current state analysis weaknesses, I came up with conceptual framework which could help in solving the problem which we are facing in the co-source projects. The key problems in current state analysis cannot be solved from one simple solution, there can be solved from combining these suggestions given in conceptual framework.

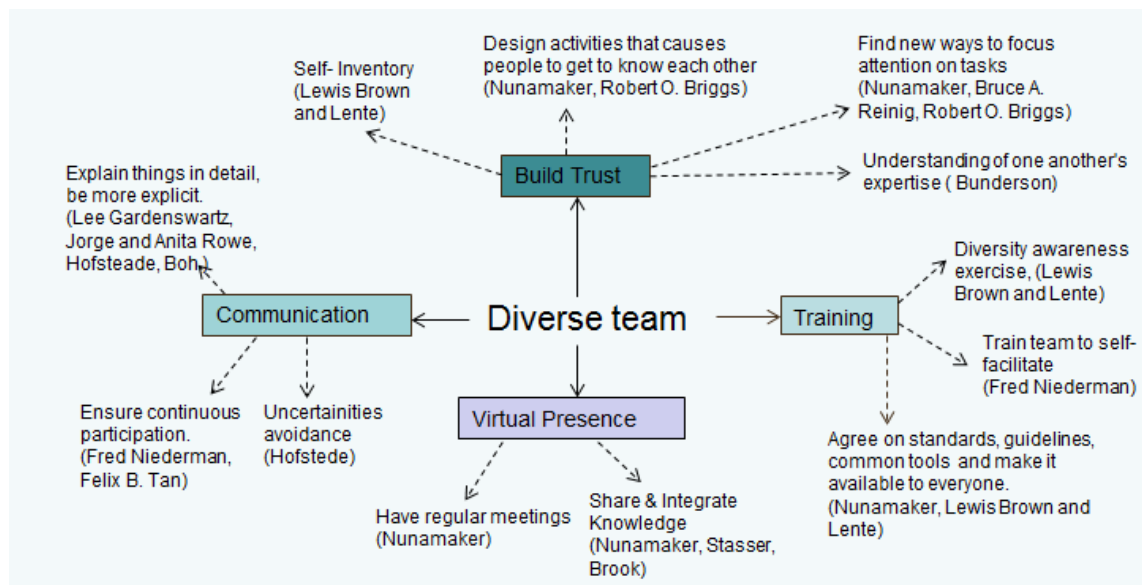


Figure 4: Conceptual Framework

Build Trust

- Find new ways to focus attention on task. (Robert O. Briggs, Nunamaker ,Bruce A. Reinig)
- Design activities that causes people to get to know each other (Nunamaker, Robert O. Briggs, Bruce A. Reinig)
- Self- Inventory (Lewis Brown and Lente)
- Understanding of one another's expertise (Bunderson)

To make a diverse high performance teams, the team members should have knowledge of themselves and non-judge mental openness to their co-team members and their cultures.

In a distributed team, trust is measured almost completely in terms of reliability. Trusting someone means we have to be able to rely on the other person, we have to show respect and commitment to each other. Being honest with other team members creates sense of confidence among team members. Trust might not be the ultimate factor of successful team work, but undoubtedly is one of the key factors that enable efficient collaboration between team members; fundamentally it glues the team together.

Before starting to work as members of a new group, team members can benefit from assessing their own awareness at three levels:

Personal Patterns – What are my own ways of being my own styles of thinking and communicating, and my own work preferences? Do I mask or value my own differences?

Interpersonal patterns – Am I generally aware of other team members and how they perceive one another? What are the interpersonal and group dynamics?

Cultural patterns – Am I generally aware of and respectful of cultural differences? Am I prepared to work closely with team members whose ways of thinking and behaving come from a different cultural perspective?

Understanding and acknowledging team members expertise will increase trust among team members. Teams are quite poor at identifying their more expert members, often simply assuming that the more assertive and dominant team members are the most expert. It is observed that when members have correct understanding of one another's expertise and acknowledges each other's expertise then teams seem to perform better and make more informed decisions.

In multi-location teams, the off-shore team will need methods and tools to help them understand the task in hand; for example, using whiteboards on Microsoft Lync calls when talking to the off-shore team, will enable them to see the whiteboard like they see in the face-to-face meeting. Using application sharing during Microsoft lync calls is another way to focus attention on tasks. So managers need to be creative and find which solution fits best for their team.

For building trust when teams are in different places, it is important to involve both the teams. If face-to-face kick off of the project is not possible, then a virtual one can be

tried. Every member should introduce themselves and tell something unique about themselves to break the ice. Another way is instead of daily calls where you can just hear voice, use video calls or video conference time to time, where team members can see each other. So managers of diverse teams need to design new ways to help team member know each other.

To summarize, in order to gain trust in the team it is important that everyone is aware & they acknowledge each other expertise. We will have to design team activities which involve teams in both locations. New ways or methods to do the tasks should be experimented to see which is most suitable for the team and having regular meeting to see if there are issues or to celebrate small achievements will enable trust in the team.

Communication

- Ensure continuous participation (Fred Niederman, Felix B. Tan)
- Be more explicit. Explain in detail (Lee Gardenswartz, Jorge and Anita Rowe , Hoffstede)
- Uncertainty avoidance (Hoffstede)

Distributed team members must define their work processes in far more detail, and communicate concepts far more explicitly than members of face-to-face teams. This admonition may come easily to people of a low-context culture such as Europe where individuals tend to speak directly without elaboration. But it may take away some richness from those more comfortable in a high-context culture such as the Asia. Perhaps, in spite of cultural issues, explicit communication is a necessary ingredient for successful globally distributed teams. Distributed team members in high context countries may be hard pressed to use the systems in the manner intended. To win contracts and successfully complete projects, individuals may simply need to conform to norms that are not preferred. This recommends the need for team leaders to consider creation of alternative tools and practices incorporating a wider variety of cultural norms.

It is project manager's task to communicate efficiently about uncertainties to the team. Avoiding uncertainty is different from "avoiding risk". Many cultures avoid uncertainty. The uncertainty avoidance dimension indicates the level of comfort with unstructured situations, in which unstructured situations are "novel, unknown, surprising, and different from usual" (Hofstede 2011).

To summaries effective communication is needed for diverse workforce. Team members should also come forward and ask more questions if something is unclear to them. Manager should ensure that goals, objectives, priorities are conveyed to everyone and in case there is some uncertainty that should be communicated properly. Team members should also practice to be more explicit, they should explain in detail if they are explaining some concepts or relevant work related to the task in hand to avoid confusion and conflict at later stage.

Virtual presence

- Have regular meetings. (Nunamaker)
- Share & Integrate Knowledge(Nunamaker, Stasser,Brooks)

It is very important to establish and maintain virtual presence. Many collaboration technologies include useful mechanisms for establishing virtual presence. Some display a list of currently active participants; others display an image of a virtual workspace with some icon representing each current participant. Still others give audible or text-based cues each time a participant joins or leaves a session, Which ever technology is used for virtual presence it should be stable, user-friendly and accessible and people should be familiar with the available technology.

Sharing knowledge is important whether it is put in common agreed place or done via video conference or Microsoft Lync. Knowledge sharing is a key requirement for developing the synergy and innovative capabilities of a team, even within teams of non-experts. By strengthening team's collaboration skills, knowledge sharing enables individuals to work with other team members and collaborate to develop and create more revolutionary products, services and solutions.

The distributed knowledge approach focuses on whether and under what conditions team members are able to pool unshared knowledge and information in order to make informed decisions. A central finding from research in this area is that teams are quite poor at integrating unshared information but that they improve when they are given explicit cues that indicate who might know what says Stasser (1995), Brook (2005).

To summarize having stable virtual presence is very important for a distributed team. For the teams in distributed environment, sharing and integrating information is very important to be successful in project delivery. In virtual teams, communication is done

via electronic correspondence media. Therefore it is important to have the right technology in place to enable efficient communication and collaboration between team members.

Training

- Diversity awareness exercise (Lewis Brown and Lente)
- Agree on standards and build guidelines (Nunamaker, Lewis Brown and Lente)
- Train team to be self-facilitate (Nunamaker)

Ethnocentrism is the enemy of diverse high-performance teams. Unless participants are willing to examine their assumptions about individual team members and to experiment with other ways of being and working, a team will never gel. Stereotypes, biases, prejudices, assumptions create background noise which interferes with people's ability to see and hear things clearly therefore diversity awareness exercise is necessary for a diverse team. This could be done for example by making teams aware of different cultures via some presentation.

Although diversity is valuable, it can result in conflicting expectations in terms of work processes, including language and behavioral norms. It is good to agree on standards, guidelines & common tools in the beginning of the project. Common tools training can be given if the team members are not aware of it. If common tools are not used, it can create confusion and misunderstanding among team members.

In high power distance cultures that value hierarchy, self-facilitate may be difficult advice for people. It may be that global IT team leaders working with large numbers of people from high power distance cultures need to extend their range of controlling strategies to successfully run distributed teams from such cultures. A transition period of moving from highly directive to more self-governing teams will be required. In doing so, managers also need to be careful in responding to early efforts at self-facilitation. Often self-facilitating team can go to unexpected and even potentially harmful directions. The manager must accept certain amount of non-optimal decisions and behaviours, but must also understand how to facilitate the teams to grow self-direction but within acceptable bounds.

To summaries, diverse teams should be aware of each other culture which will help them understand the meaning or intentions behind a person's words. Being aware of

differences usually leads to fewer misunderstandings and will help to gain mutual respect. Manager should create process on how the team will interact, which common tools should be used. He should educate and train the team to use common tools for sharing information and also encourage team members to self-facilitate themselves within acceptable boundaries.

The solution to the key problems shown in current state analysis cannot be solved with just one suggestion; it can be solved by combining suggestions given in conceptual framework. For example for building up trust in a diverse team, it is important to have good communication skills, knowledge of others expertise, using common tools and sharing knowledge and information.

Following table shows the key problem and their suggested solution as found in conceptual framework.

Problems seen in current state analysis	Solution as found in Conceptual framework	Brief description
<p>Ramping up the off-shore team takes lot of time, effort and lot of communication.</p>	<p>Be more explicit. Explain in detail (Lee Gardenswartz, Jorge and Anita Rowe , Hofstede)</p> <p>Self- Inventory (Lewis Brown and Lente)</p> <p>Understanding of one another's expertise (Bunderson)</p> <p>Diversity awareness exercise (Lewis Brown and Lente)</p> <p>Have regular meetings. (Nunamaker)</p>	<p>For ramping up, it will be good to explain the team their goals and objectives and explain in detail in the beginning. Knowing about self, how I perceive others and how I like to work with others is also good to know. In a team if everyone is aware of each other's expertise then it will enable trust in the team. All team members should participate in diversity awareness exercise to know about other's culture and behavior. As the team is ramping up, a regular meeting to see if there are issues or problem is also a good practice.</p>
<p>Having team in off-shore makes it more difficult for off-shore team members to gain domain knowledge and deliver value.</p>	<p>Agree on standards and build guidelines, common tools (Nunamaker, Lewis Brown and Lente)</p> <p>Share & Integrate Knowledge (Nunamaker, Stasser ,Brooks)</p> <p>Train team to be self-facilitate</p>	<p>For the teams in different locations it is important to agree on the standards, guidelines and common tools to avoid confusion and misunderstanding. As the subject matter expert is in on-shore location, having regular sessions to share knowledge will be beneficial.</p>

	(Nunamaker)	Also the off-shore team needs to put in some effort to self-facilitate them.
It took lot of time for the teams to gain trust on each other.	<p>Understanding of one another's expertise (Bunderson)</p> <p>Design activities that causes people to get to know each other (Nunamaker, Robert O. Briggs, Bruce A. Reinig)</p> <p>Find new ways to focus attention on task. (Robert O. Briggs, Bruce A. Reinig ,Nunamaker)</p> <p>Have regular meetings. (Nunamaker)</p>	To gain trust in the team it is important that everyone is aware & they acknowledge each other expertise. We will have to design team activities which involve teams in both locations. New ways or methods to do the tasks should be experimented to see which is most suitable for the team and having regular meeting to see if there are issues or to celebrate small achievements will enable trust in the team.
<p>Requirements not clear on several occasions.</p> <p>Priority change was not communicated to the off-shore team.</p>	<p>Ensure continuous participation (Fred Niederman, Felix B. Tan)</p> <p>Agree on standards (Nunamaker, Lewis Brown and Lente)</p> <p>Be more explicit. Explain in detail (Lee Gardenswartz, Jorge and Anita Rowe , Hofstede)</p> <p>Have regular meetings. (Nunamaker)</p> <p>Uncertainty avoidance (Hof-</p>	For any unclear issue, the reason could be either everyone is not present in regular meetings or it has not been convened properly and clearly. Hence explaining and asking questions through regular meeting will help the team so that everyone knows what is happening in the project.

	stede)	
Project guidelines were not conveyed properly which created confusion in the beginning	<p>Build guidelines (Nunamaker, Lewis Brown and Lente)</p> <p>Have regular meetings. (Nunamaker)</p> <p>Be more explicit. Explain in detail (Lee Gardenswartz, Jorge and Anita Rowe , Hofstede)</p>	Guidelines should be built in the beginning of the project, it can be refined latter, but everyone should be aware of the guidelines. These guidelines should be in detail explaining why it is needed and how it should be done. If there is any confusion regarding guidelines, it can be clarified in regular meetings
Experienced team members take interesting tasks in the project and less experienced members are left with low hanging fruits of the project.	<p>Understanding of one another's expertise (Bunderson)</p> <p>Share & Integrate Knowledge (Nunamaker, Stasser, Brooks)</p> <p>Find new ways to focus attention on task. (Robert O. Briggs, Bruce A. Reinig ,Nunamaker)</p>	If we understand other person's expertise, then we will have more confidence in his work. Therefore it is important to know other's expertise. We should be open to explaining and involving junior members and share knowledge, it might be that their questions might validate our way or find gaps in our understanding.
With diverse experience team it is harder to learn and deliver.	<p>Train team to be self-facilitate (Nunamaker)</p> <p>Share & Integrate Knowledge (Nunamaker, Stasser, Brooks)</p>	Team members should come forward and ask more questions. Sharing and integrating teams knowledge will help in delivery of project. Team's productivity will increase by sharing and integrating knowledge.

It took lot of time to achieve good team dynamics.	<p>Ensure continuous participation (Fred Niederman, Felix B. Tan)</p> <p>Understanding of one another's expertise (Bunderson)</p> <p>Agree on standards and build guidelines ,common tools (Nunamaker, Lewis Brown and Lente)</p> <p>Have regular meetings. (Nunamaker)</p> <p>Share & Integrate Knowledge (Nunamaker, Stasser, Brooks)</p>	In order to achieve good team dynamics, team should agree on which common tool and standards to use in the early phase. Team members should be aware of other's expertise and they should come forward to help, share and integrate knowledge and should meet regularly either face-to-face or using some communication technology for off-shore team
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Table 1: Key problem and their solution in conceptual framework

The results of the conceptualized framework and strength points which were visible in current state analysis were used to build the initial proposal for common conceptualized best practices to manage diversity in co-source projects. Next chapter will give more details in building these common conceptualized best practices.

5 Building common conceptualized best practices to better manage diversity

It stands out that managers of diverse teams need more skills than a traditional manager of homogeneous team. So I developed the following initial proposal along with two project managers who manage co-sourced diverse team. These initially proposed guidelines take into consideration the current state analysis strengths and summary of conceptual framework.

5.1 Building practices for key problem area 1 - cultural diversity

Managing and working with global diverse teams present geographic, logistical, cultural and linguistic considerations. Being unaware of communication and cultural problems can certainly challenge relationships amongst team members and project execution. Therefore, it is essential to build culture and other diversity awareness, build understanding and collaboration and build effective way of communication to avoid confusion and conflict.

For the problem area of cultural diversity which is due to teams in different locations, having different cultures we came up with following points which should be improved.

Training: As said by Lewis Brown and Lente (1995), Stereotypes, biases, prejudices, assumptions create background noise which interferes with people's ability to see and hear things clearly therefore diversity awareness exercise is necessary for a diverse team. Being unaware of cultural nuances could challenge team member's relationships and project execution. Training about self and about other cultures will be beneficial for the team. Cultural knowledge can also be gained through casual or informal observations. Understanding other cultures can begin with perceiving the diversity and difference in the way people think, talk, act, eat, play and live. Being aware of differences usually leads to fewer misunderstandings and to gain mutual respect. Educate and train the team to set expectation, to create processes on how the team will interact, which common tools they will use and put the appropriate tools in place says Nunamaker (2009) and Lewis Brown and Lente (1995).

Building Trust: Trust is both important and difficult to build because the teams are in different location and interaction is less. Regular virtual presence, clear communication helps in building trust in the team. Find new ways to focus attention on task and design activities that causes people to get to know each other says Nunamaker, Bruce A. Reinig, Robert O. Briggs (2009). Leaders of virtual teams must design explicit activities to

promote team building. A kick-off project meeting is a proven way to promote the social interaction and relationship building necessary in teams. If a face-to-face kickoff meeting is not feasible, the team can always organize one virtually.

Better Communication: The most important key to leading a team is communication. Effective communication tricks need to be done at time to pass the message. According to Lee Gardenswartz, Jorgen and Rowe (2009), Hofstede (2011) and Boh (2007), there is a need to be more explicit in communication as in some cultures they expect more detail description. In some cultures, the expressional forms and styles of the language are greatly dictated by the context in which those words are spoken. English language although spoken in India is thus labeled a high contextual language while English spoken in America or Europe is known as a low contextual one.

Ensure continuous participation as said by Fred Niederman, Felix B. Tan (2011) will help to build good team dynamics. Manager needs to ensure continuous participation from all team members and resolve conflicts. It also means each team member should contribute their view and ideas when appropriate. It is very likely that the team will start experiencing high level of commitment and synergy by involving its members actively to participate in various activities. Communication about some ambiguity or uncertainty have to be communicated differently taking into consideration that team is from different culture Hofstede (2011)

The project manager should also pay additional attention to the clarity and direction of the team. In order to function properly, the team members require correct knowledge on what their responsibilities are, what they are supposed to be doing and how things should be done. Co-located team members need this knowledge too, but it is gained through both formal and informal actions as a part of their daily work. If the spoken and written language is different between the team members, defining the ways to work and ensuring that all understand them in the same way is even more important. A clear and defining project vision will help to align the team member's endeavors so that everyone is working in the same direction and towards same project vision.

Virtual Presence: Communicating virtually can often become less influential. A significant amount of risk is involved in sharing knowledge. When requesting knowledge from a team member, an individual can feel that he is exposing the limitations of his own knowledge which can put him in a vulnerable position. Within virtual teams, this vulnerability is more as team members do not have the benefit of requesting knowledge

through face-to-face interactions but if there is trust within the team members than they can overcome this barrier. Ensuring that the team is virtually connected any time and the infrastructure is stable for the virtual presence is very important for virtual team. As mentioned by Nunamaker (2009), having regular meetings with team is important; it shows the virtual presence of the team members. Having knowledge sharing sessions, daily status calls are some of the ways of showing virtual presence and can also help in gaining trust.

5.2 Building practices for key problem area 2 - experience diversity

For the problem area of experience diversity we came up with following points which should be improved in addition to the ones which are stated above. These points are to some extent overlapping with the ones in cultural diversity.

Building Trust: Teams of relatively more generalists may be better prepared to respond dynamically to changing circumstances than teams of specialists. A clear and defining project vision or goal will help to align the team member's efforts so that everyone is working in the same direction and towards same project vision or goal. Tell every team member how they fit into the project from their perspective. Also as said by Bunderson (2002), understanding and acknowledging one another expertise can help in building trust in the team.

Share and integrate knowledge: In software development teams, diversity of team member experience will help the teams better reconcile and recombine differences in opinion, and will help in designing, coding, or debugging solution for new or existing programs more efficiently. According to Stasser (1995) and Brook (2005) having the knowledge of each other expertise and integrating the diverse knowledge will help the team to arrive at a more effective solution for the problem in hand and we should have a common place to store common information.

Tasks Division: Even if diversity in team member's experience is useful in theory, it may be less so in practice due to coordination challenges among team members says Bunderson (2002). The fact that team members have relevant knowledge does not mean that they will be successful in using it. Experience members can fill the knowledge gap but lot of coordination is needed, if the coordination is not done properly this diversity can have adverse effect and there could be conflicts within team.

These points suggest that a team's diversity could positively or negatively impact performance when tasks change. So the team leader should find innovative way to focus attention on tasks and set up intelligent time frame for the task. For example, divide the task in such a way that there is always one experience member and others are less experience members for the same task.

5.3 Summary of initial proposed practice

Based on the conceptual framework and current state analysis, initial proposal for common conceptualized best practices was made along with two project managers. This initial proposal included six areas of improvement for the co-source projects



Fig: Areas for improvements in initial proposal

Here is the summary of the initial proposed practices.

Areas	Description
Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be clear in communicating. Communicate guidelines, ground rules in the beginning of the project • Make the team aware of different cultures, behaviors styles etc. • Ensure continuous participation by all team. • Full and complete exchange of information should be done. • If any conflict surface then their resolution should be done as early as possible. • Conduct synchronous and asynchronous interchanges where ever needed. • Tell every team member how they fit into the project from their perspective. • Tell every team member how they are important to the organization. • Show appreciation on different occasions.
Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set up intelligent time frames for tasks. • Intelligent division and assignment of tasks should be done. • Monitor task completion for completeness and quality • Integrate completed tasks into larger team products.

Priority	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reorganize critical paths for sequencing of activities. • Ensure priority attention is given to the project relative to other group member obligations. • Ensure that everyone knows about priority changes.
Work progress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure team understands common goals. • Arrange domain knowledge share sessions time to time. • Have daily calls to monitor progress or if there are impediments. • Negotiate which common tools and work processes are useful, keep common place for sharing knowledge and version control systems.
Virtual Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that terms are used consistently even when their reference difference varies in different locations. • Ensure smooth acceptance of varied holidays. • Accept labor rules, time zones differences and other physical geography issues • Provide stable infrastructure to enable daily calls, video calls or other meetings. Involve Project management office if needed to solve these issues.
Celebration and Appreciation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Celebrate accomplishments along the way. It keeps the generative power of the team evolving. • Appreciate extra effort done by team members.

6 Seeking Feedback

6.1 Description of Data collection

The feedback for proposal was taken from project manager and HR. Balanced feedback involves positive things as well as negatives while ensuring that important feedback messages are understood and acted upon. The feedback for initial proposal was done via Lync call and the feedback for the final proposal was received as an email.

6.2 Initial common conceptualized best practices feedback

The above guidelines were reviewed by four project managers who were in co-source projects and in summary the feedback was that although it is well formulated list, but we will benefit more if we have this list in more granular form with links and examples. So I divided the guidelines in three different levels in project execution stage and in more simple form.

Feedback from PM1:

Q) What do you think, how is the list of common proposed practices?

- I think it is well formulated list.

Q) What could have been done better for these common practices list?

- The list shows what needs to be improved; if we are developing common conceptualized best practices then the list to my understanding should be what needs to be improved in different phases of project. Making it more granular will benefit everyone.

Feedback from PM2:

Q) What do you think, how is the list of common proposed practices?

- Keeping these best practices we will definitely save cost. It will bring value to project management work.

Q) What could have been done better for these common practices list?

- None

Feedback from PM3:

Q) What do you think, how is the list of common proposed practices?

- Simple and practical list however management needs to be involved to push this change.

Q) What could have been done better for these common practices list?

- None

Feedback from PM4:

Q) What do you think, how is the list of common proposed practices?

- Well written, it identifies important gaps and suggestions to fill these gaps.

Q) What could have been done better for these common practices list?

- The guidelines could be enlarged
- Explain more with practical examples and
- Add the case company's links wherever appropriate.

These guidelines were revised according to the comments and resulted in the final common conceptualized best practices. The final guidelines and their feedback are in next chapter.

6.3 Summary of final corrected version

The common practices or guidelines created in this thesis are in simple language, very practical, generic, comprehensive but not exhaustive.

These guidelines are written for project managers and are according to different stage of project execution stage in co-source project. To make it simple they are divided into beginning or initial stage of project execution -> middle stage of project execution-> end stage of project execution.

These points are also useful for promoting shared understanding and facilitating communication among team members. Building trusts, cultural diversity awareness, clear guidelines and expectations, effective communication, having virtual presence are some of the essential elements for an effective diverse workforce for these projects.

Stages	Guidelines
Initial Stage	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Stand out test for self-assessment should be given to the team members. One free online test is https://www.123test.com/ and another tool which can be used in the case company is https://standout.tmbc.com/. Diverse high performance teams require members who have knowledge of themselves and have non-judge mental openness to their colleagues and their culture. Before starting to work as members of a new group, individuals can benefit from assessing their own awareness. 2. Cultural awareness presentation should be shown to the team. This helps the teams to better understand each other way of working. “Case company global” and case company’s “cultural awareness network” has some training/presentations on cultural differences. 3. Agree on standards and guidelines and make it available to everyone using share point, dashboards, Confluence or any other tool. Time, agenda, criticality all should be visible to every team member. 4. Proper infrastructure should be available for all team members whether off-shore or on-shore. If necessary have a PMO team in offshore to facilitate infrastructure, connection, network, access issues. 5. Involve the offshore team in the project kickoff. Invite them on-shore or use video conference during the kick-off meeting. Have some team building exercise during the kick off. Each member should be told how they fit into the big picture – from their perspective. Let team members know those linkages. 6. Domain knowledge sharing sessions should start in early phase of the project. Point of contact in on-shore team

	<p>should be communicated.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 7. Notice differences in communication styles and values. Do not assume that the majority's way is the right way and try to bridge the gap. 8. When off-shore team is ramping up, it is possible that there are only few of them in the initial phase, identify the team leader in those few and he/she should be in charge of explaining all initial phase details to others who join later in the project. 9. Have daily calls with the off-shore team, not just with the team leader but with the whole team. In the initial stage it is very important to follow up on the issues, progress from off-shore prospective. 10. During the early stage it is helpful if there are some people from off-shore on client site. 11. Have a one-to-one session with all the team members in the beginning of the project.
Middle stage	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Set up intelligent time frames for tasks, reorganizing critical paths; ensure that priority attention is given to the project relative to other team member obligations. 2. Ensure an understanding for common goals, negotiate on common tools and work processes, maintain common place for knowledge sharing and version control. 3. Ensure continued participation from all team members. There should be full and complete exchange of information between team members, conflicts should be surfaced and resolved as early as possible, conduct synchronous and asynchronous exchange of information.

	<p>4. Intelligent division and assignment of tasks, monitor tasks and ensure that they are completed with good quality.</p> <p>5. Be more explicit and teach the team to do the same. In Europe individuals tend to speak directly without elaboration but it may take away some of the richness. Explicit communication is a necessary for any successful globally distributed IT teams.</p> <p>6. Communicate uncertainty and ambiguity efficiently as in some cultures uncertainty is considered dangerous.</p> <p>7. Subject matter expert calls should be done if needed from on-shore.</p> <p>8. Project manager and key team members should visit on-shore and off-shore to enabled communication channels.</p> <p>9. Have regular retrospective to see how we are doing the project and what steps we can take to make our process better.</p> <p>10. Technical difficulties should be sorted out as early as possible.</p> <p>11. Team important tasks should be distributed in such a way that for each important task there is one experienced team member and two less experienced team members. This was a good way to distribute tasks and less experienced team members could actively contribute to the team and develop their abilities.</p> <p>12. Have regular visits between off-shore and on-shore people.</p>
End stage	<p>During end of the project, many projects are such that there is one or two people left on-shore and majority are in off-shore or it might be that the whole team is in off-shore.</p>

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Train team to self-facilitate. This may be difficult advice for people from high power distance cultures. In Asian culture quite much value is given to your hierarchy in the company. It may be that global IT team leaders working with large numbers of people from high power distance cultures need to extend their range of controlling strategies to successfully run distributed teams from such cultures. 2. A transition period of moving from highly directive to more self-governing teams will be required. In doing so, managers also need to be careful in responding to early efforts at self-facilitation. Often self-facilitating team charter in unexpected and even potentially harmful directions. The manager must accept certain amount of non-optimal decisions and behaviours, but must also understand how to facilitate the teams to grow self-direction but within acceptable bounds. 3. Have a lesson learned session and add it to knowledge share, so that in the future, successes can be repeated, and failures avoided. 4. Prepare issues and risk list. 5. Prepare forecast. This is based on the project as a whole and will include time and cost matrix.
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In addition to these there are some skills which are needed at all stages these are mentioned below.

In All Stages:

- Be flexible in personal styles of initiating relationships.
- Learn a new way of listening to the meaning or intensions behind a person's words; intentions may be the same, but cultures express it differently.

- Clarify sources of discomfort.
- Clarify vision, ask if assumptions about vision, decisions, plan and actions are the same. Uncover real and relevant differences by asking open-ended questions.
- Differentiate between cultural misunderstandings, diversity issues and relationship dynamics.
- Build bridge, understand and notice the sore nerves. Leverage them to prevent more costly sore nerves later and find common grounds.
- Practice a new kind of listening and understanding remembering cultural dictates.
- Good communication is not enough, be authentic, real and unmask your true self.
- Create an open space in which individuals can exist and co-exist.
- Daily status calls should be used to track the progress of the project which involved the team in off-shore and on-shore team. It is good way to keep the communication channels open.
- Create shared matrix to see the team performance.
- Deal with ambiguity.
- Develop flexible feedback skills. Should be able to give feedback so that everyone is comfortable and respect differences in the ways people give and receive feedback.
- Balance differences and similarities depending on the goal.
- Tolerate creative tension to move towards a higher outcome.

- Celebrate accomplishments along the way. It keeps the generative power of the team evolving.
- Team members can conduct an informal thanking ritual, expressing their appreciation to individual colleagues. Recalling specific incidents they overcame reinforces the bonds among team members. It also leaves them with the feeling that they have become part of the family, a network of close associates they may call on in the future.

6.4 Final common conceptualized best practices feedback

The final version of the common conceptualized best practices is now in case companies knowledge exchange and can be used by any project manager. HR will promote it using their newsletters; they will put it in more permanent place to give it more visibility and use it in their diversity management workshops.

Listed below is some of the feedback for the final version.

Stakeholder 1:

Comment: I appreciate the time you spend on improving our way of working. These practices or ideas would definitely result in cost saving for the project.

Recommend: I wish we could do deeper dive into resolving conflicts, but on the other hand if we follow these recommendations then maybe we will have less conflicts to resolve.

Stakeholder 2:

Comment: The initial stage is very important, where Do and Don't gets defined. Kick-off to include all members is certainly good, but at times video conference is not that effective and bonding.

Stakeholder 3:

Comment: Perfect! Great handbook for Project Team. The right mix of planning, monitoring, and controlling can make the difference in completing project on time and budget.

Stakeholder 4:

Comment: As a project manager I see that most of the "good practices" mentioned, but how these taken in practice is very much a debatable question.

Recommendation: If “lessons learnt session” from the previous project can be made a part (mandatory) of the initial phase, it might have positive effect.

Stakeholder 5:

Comment: We are looking at improving gender diversity this fiscal year. We could promote these common conceptualized best practices in IT projects in coming newsletters, cultural awareness web site and our yammer group inside Finland.

7 Conclusion

Most of the project managers have an idea on the weakness of the current way of working in diverse teams. However there was no common conceptualized list of best practices in that area, I have tried to fill in that gap by creating the common conceptualized best practices for dealing with diverse teams. This section summarizes the study and suggests further steps for implementation of the concept. Finally, this section evaluates the thesis comparing the outcome of the thesis with the initial objective, and evaluates credibility of the thesis.

7.1 Short summary of whole project

Globalization has generated the need for the diverse distributed teams. Having diverse distributed teams in place gives the organizations an advantage to react and complete quickly customer demands, but putting bunch of people together does not guarantee satisfying results. It can happen that these bunches of people distrust each other to such degree that they are unable to work together. Efficient coordination and direction is required to guarantee any team's and company's success.

Team performance depends on how efficiently the team is trained and how well the team is managed. In addition stable supporting systems like stable network for virtual teams is need for successful diverse teams. It depends on the efficiency of the project manager/team leader to develop the team to a successful team.

This Thesis utilized action research as its research approach and conducted two separate data collection phases, and the data was collected via the personal interviews. Some of the interviews and discussions were done via skype calls.

The analysis of the first data collection investigated the weakness and strengths of the current way of working in co-source type of project in case company and identifies the key problem areas of the current way of working. The best practice found from literature keeping in mind the key problem area resulted into a conceptual framework. After the conceptual framework and keeping in mind the strength of current state analysis an initial proposal was made. The initial proposal was made along with two project managers who have worked in co-sourced projects. During the initial proposal lot of discussion was done face-to-face and also using skype with project managers.

The initial proposal was further evaluated by four project managers and reviewed with changes. This was the second data collection stage. After correcting the initial proposal

according to the feedback, final version of common conceptualized best practices was made and it was again evaluated. The revised version of common conceptualized best practices was approved without needs for improvements or modifications.

This thesis aimed at incorporating some common conceptualized best practices of managing diversity and demonstrating potential improvement areas for the management in dealing with diverse teams. It was interpreted throughout the results that cultural diversity awareness, building trust, clear guidelines and expectations, effective communication, having virtual presence are ways to become a coherent well-functioning, effective team for co-source projects.

7.2 Next steps and recommendations

These common diversity management practices will be promoted by HR in their newsletters but for the time being it is available in knowledge exchange and in public streams of the case company and can be used by any project manager.

If these common conceptualized best practices are used in the co-source projects it will reduce the time, effort and cost for projects and will make a high performance effective team. The high-performance team is a team which has trust on its team member and everyone is focused on team's goal and they have all the supportive processes that will enable them to overcome any obstacle in achieving the team's goals.

It is also important to keep in mind that there is no set formula or rules for success in any team, especially diverse teams. Only by understanding the difficulties and differences of diverse teams, management and team members can prepare themselves and take advantage of their strengths to promote success.

7.3 Evaluation

This section evaluates the thesis comparing the outcome to the initial objective of the thesis as well as evaluating the validity of the research and the reliability of the results.

7.3.1 Outcome vs objective

The objective of the thesis was to develop common conceptualized best practices in co-source type of projects. In the current state analysis phase, it became obvious that the case company does not have common conceptualised way of working in co-source type of project with diverse teams.

The thesis proposes common conceptualized best practices to be used in co-source type of project in case company. The common conceptualized best practices have been reviewed by other project managers who are working in co-source projects in case company. The feedback obtained confirmed the effectiveness of the common conceptualized best practices. With the proposed common conceptualized best practices, case company would be able to overcome the issues found in current state analysis and will be able to form a high performance and efficient team and will be able to deliver project on time and in budget.

The following subsection explores credibility concerns which will ensure that this research was conducted in an academic style.

7.3.2 Credibility

This thesis involves collection and analysis of qualitative data. Patton (1999) recognizes that "issues of quality and credibility intersect with audience and intended research purposes".

According to him the criteria for credibility of the research are

- The researcher should use rigorous techniques and methods for gathering high quality data.
- The data collected should be carefully analyzed, with attention to issues of reliability, validity and triangulation.
- Credibility of the researchers in terms of training and his/her experience, his/her track record, his/her status and presentation of self
- Analysis should be creative but also should be methodical.
- Sufficient detail should be reported to allow others to judge the quality of the resulting product.

Taking these points in consideration and linking it to my thesis I can say that the business problem found in the case company is relevant as seen by the stakeholders and I was myself involved in these co-source projects. I have seen the re-scoping and delay in project delivery and missing trust among team members.

The current state analysis is done using interviews. Interviews were done with several project managers and key members. The questions were framed differently to get a reliable answer. The interviewees and the reviewers are experienced persons in project management field and have been in the case company for several years.

The literature review is done to find out what are the best documented practices globally for the problems found in current state analysis. Further the initial proposal is built based on the strength found in current state analysis and conceptual framework. The initial proposal is built along with the stakeholder. Short feedback was received about the initial proposal and after doing some changes final proposal was made.

The study uses proper techniques and literature to base the outcome. As a summary from above mentioned perspectives this thesis is a credible Thesis.

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8 Appendix 1. Interview questionnaires

Questions asked from Leadership / HR

Q1) How does diversity management practices in the case company ensures that productivity is increased and cohesiveness among workers is increased in a diverse environment?

Q2) Is there some mandatory training for people when they start a project? I mean some kind of training during which supervisors, employees and managers receive lessons on the best way to interact with each other?

Q3) What measures does the case company take in case of cultural clash?

Q4) Company's needs to constantly develop, implement and maintain ongoing training and awareness creation. How is the case company doing it?

Q5) Are there some mentoring programs for question 4?

Q6) There are many projects which require people from off-shore or near-shore, how is the management helping these projects related to cultural diversity?

Q7) What are the best practices there, are they global best practices, are there any global or common principles which project resources should be made aware of before or in early stage of project. Are there any workshops conducted?

Q8) What are the challenges which the case company has faced in terms of diversity? or What do you see as the most challenging aspect of a diverse workforce in projects and what steps have the case company taken to meet these challenges?

General question asked from Project Managers

Q1) What kind of project are you involved in?

Q2) Is the team located in one place?

Q3) Workforce diversity can bring about an increase in productivity and competitive advantages. Is it advantageous to you to have diverse team?

Q4) Have you seen the cultural diversity website?

Q5) What are the difficulties you are facing related to diverse team?

Q6) Did you get any help from the company, they have a portal with trainings about diversity for managers and senior managers? Any guidelines?

Q7) Matrix is a way to validate that the diverse team is adding value. Did you have any matrix to see how well your diverse team is working?

Q8) Any general recommendation?

Specific questions from Project Managers

Q1) Have you visited your off-shore team? Where are they located? Do they know you?

Q2) Did you get any help from company, they have a portal with trainings about diversity for managers and senior managers .Any guidelines?

Q3) Having diverse team problems, did it affect the cost and timeline of delivery?

Q4) Do you think if we have common practices for dealing with diversity, it can help in saving the project cost and helping with delivery?

Initial Phase questions

Q5) What are the difficulties you are facing related to diverse team, can you explain it in different stages of the project.

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Q6) How often do you have conflicts in your team? How do you handle those?

Q7) In which phase of project did you see these conflicts?

Q8) Guidelines should be dictated in the beginning. We give the right and instruction on how to operate in the project. Has it been conveyed?

Q9) How was knowledge sharing done in your team?

Q10) Is everyone clear about their roles and project vision?

Middle stage

Q11) Did the team have trust on each other in this stage of project?

Q12) Was there any conflict in this stage of project? How did you solve them?

Q13) What are the difficulties you were facing related to diverse team in the middle stage of the project.

Final stage

Q14) Matrix is a way to validate that the diverse team is adding value. Did you have any matrix to see how well your diverse team is working?

Q15) The project will soon go in application maintenance phase, how is the handover planned.

Q16) Any general recommendation for working with high performance diverse teams.

Questions from key project member

Initial stage

Q1) Was the project vision clear to you in initial stage?

Q2) Was the role and scope of the role clear to you? How you fit in the team?

Q3) Did you or your team get any guidelines?

Q4) How much time did it take for you to understand the expectation of stakeholders and to understand your work?

Q5) How is the communication with on-shore team? How often do you communicate?

Q6) Would you appreciate if your colleague know more about your culture?

Middle stage

Q7) Are the team members comfortable with each other?

Q8) How often did you communicate?

Q9) Did you have enough architecture knowledge of the domains?

Q10) Is off-shore involved in sprint planning?

Final stage

Q11) Are you clear how the application maintenance will take place?

Q12) What are the challenges your team faced with the current project?

9 Appendix 2. Feedback after initial proposal

The feedback for initial proposal was done via lync call.

Feedback from PM1:

Q) What do you think, how is the list of common proposed practices?

- I think it is well formulated list.

Q) What could have been done better for these common practices list?

- The list shows what needs to be improved; if we are developing common conceptualized best practices then the list to my understanding should be what needs to be improved in different phases of project. Making it more granular will benefit everyone.

Feedback from PM2:

Q) What do you think, how is the list of common proposed practices?

- Keeping these best practices we will definitely save cost. It will bring value to project management work.

Q) What could have been done better for these common practices list?

- None

Feedback from PM3:

Q) What do you think, how is the list of common proposed practices?

- Simple and practical list however management needs to be involved to push this change.

Q) What could have been done better for these common practices list?

- None

Feedback from PM4:

Q) What do you think, how is the list of common proposed practices?

- Well written, it identifies important gaps and suggestions to fill these gaps.

Q) What could have been done better for these common practices list?

- The guidelines could be enlarged
- Explain more with practical examples and
- Add the Company's links wherever appropriate.